

DCCD 2020**Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding****LINGUISTIC PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL
ONLINE ACCOUNTS OF TOP RUSSIAN JOURNALISTS**

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Abstract

The development of social media in the 21st century has changed the quality and level of political participation of all public policy entities. Every second an enormous amount of network data is produced in the online space leading to the creation and transformation of discursive fields in both online and offline space. A feature of online communication between top journalists and users of journalistic content is a linguistic pattern. To analyze the linguistic patterns of communication the social accounts of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak (according to the Citation Index of the Medialogia company for the period January 1-30, 2020; database is more than 54 thousand sources) on VK, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter were chosen. The total audience of these journalists was about 6 million direct subscribers (indirect consumers of journalistic content are of about 60 million users). The socio-political context of the formed data sets was the reaction of journalists and the public to the Address from the President of Russia V.V. Putin to the Federal Assembly on January 15, 2020. The resulting data sets were subjected to network analysis, linguistic-discursive analysis, folksonomic analysis. As a result some conclusions were drawn about what language-discursive features characterize the posts of top journalists in popular social networks; how their linguistic patterns are characterized; how the content created by journalists differs in different social networks; what is the specificity of these differences; how the political context affects their linguistic patterns; how linguistic patterns of journalists influence online communication models.

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Keywords: Communication, linguistic patterns, medialogic analysis, network linguistics, online space, social online accounts.



1. Introduction

Every day in the online space 3 billion gigabytes of various content are generated, transmitted and played back, users send 195 billion emails, view and post 5 billion video files on YouTube, carry out 4 billion requests to search engines (“Trends in monetization of content...”, 2019). Media Consumption in Russia – 2019, www.wwi.ru). Online space has become an integral part of social space making it complex (in terms of the variety of data and the methods of its production and reproduction, including BigData), a non-linear, multidimensional object of study - a global space which is a network of intersecting discursive fields (formed by users, social networks and / or network communities) (González, 2018), which are both a reflection of social reality and an instrument for its construction through the production of linguistic patterns/

Every second an enormous amount of network data is produced in the online space, the influence potential of which is difficult to assess or predict (Ryabchenko et al., 2019). Digital technologies form a new culture of interactions (collaboration, the exchange of information and resources, interactivity and multimedia) and thus allow the formation of a new type of content in form, content, linguistic and cultural features and implicit meanings. Collective consciousness in view of the functioning of network communities in the “filter bubble” is becoming the dominant form of “thought” in the modern world: individuality is no longer a virtue and divergence, dissent, the do-it-yourself approach and “independent investigations” are perceived as a destructive component of discursive interaction (Benamara et al., 2018; González-Bailón & Wang, 2016), as it leads to tragic consequences, threatens security and undermines trust in state power, moral standards which carries a destructive potential for influencing the development of socio-political systems in the modern world.

2. Problem Statement

The development of social media in the first quarter of the 21st century has changed the quality and level of political participation of all public policy entities. The function of shaping the political agenda was shared by media, journalists, media personalities, well-known public figures, civic activists and top bloggers who can create and broadcast linguistic patterns that are filled with modern mass media sources, reflected in posts, reposts and comments of fans in real life and subscribers on social networks and the blogosphere (Feezell, 2018; Ott, 2017). A feature of communication between top journalists and users of journalistic content is a linguistic pattern - a way of presenting the views of a journalist, marking the text, highlighting the most important, in their opinion, information which focuses on points that require attention and discussion. Linguistic patterns produced by Russian journalists in their online-accounts require study and analysis due to their ability to create and transform discursive fields in both online and offline spaces (Jones et al., 2015; Solmaz, 2014). The consumption of linguistic patterns by both ordinary users and representatives of social media under the “power” influence of the discursive field becomes a determining factor in the process of development and adoption of individual / collective decisions, the implementation of which forms a particular social action (Katermina & Gnedash, 2018; Rodout, 2018).

The average Russian spends almost half a day on online interaction, including more than half of this time on popular social media. At the same time the younger the generation, the greater the level of confidence in social media as the main source of information compared to traditional media (Frolov, 2020).

Russian journalists are the main influencers of the modern news and information field both in offline and online spaces. The main trend in the development of the information and news field is as follows: journalists generate content in their accounts on social networks; then this content is cited and distributed by users and official media. The point of view of top journalists is becoming the dominant way in which citizens perceive social and political events in online and offline media. Linguistic patterns produced by popular Russian journalists in their online accounts are consumed by users and the media, thereby influencing the political agenda, the development of public opinion and the formation of socio-political behavior of citizens.

Thus, information and communication technologies transform social reality and pose new research questions for science related to how exactly the discursive fields and the content contained in them, and the linguistic patterns produced by them initiate a social action that affects the development and transformation of socio-political systems of modern states.

3. Research Questions

The main research task was to find answers to the following questions:

1. What linguistic-discursive features are characterized by the posts of top journalists in popular social networks?
2. How are the linguistic patterns produced by top journalists in the online space characterized?
3. Does the content created by journalists differ on different social networks? What is the specificity of these differences depending on the specifics of the social platforms themselves?
4. How does the political context influence the linguistic patterns produced by top journalists in the online space?
5. What are linguistic patterns of journalists and their impact on communication models in the online space?

4. Purpose of the Study

It is the network forms of interaction between the journalist and his audience that seem to us a relevant subject for research since this model of communication is becoming a tradition for a fundamentally new type of communication in the online space. The accounts of top journalists in Russia that we study reflect a certain type of social behavior in response to the political agenda. Each journalist as a public and public figure interested in publishing relevant content is active in social platforms, using and guided by his own style of presentation of material and his own opinion which provokes a public reaction. In turn, the consumption by users of the linguistic patterns created by the most popular journalists leads to the formation of certain social behavior outside social networks and can become a determining factor in the process of developing and making constructive / destructive individual / collective decisions in a city, region, country.

5. Research Methods

To analyze the linguistic patterns of communication in the social accounts of top Russian journalists (according to the Citation Index of the Medialogia company for the period January 1-30, 2020) (TOP-15 most cited journalists..., 2020) We selected the accounts of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak on VKontakte, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (the sequence is indicated according to the rating of popularity of social networks in Russia) (“Social networks...”, 2020). The socio-political context of the formed data sets was the reaction of journalists and the public to the Address to Federal Assembly by the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin on January 15, 2020 (President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin's Address to Federal Assembly of January, 2020). Next, all posts of these journalists were selected from accounts in the specified social networks VKontakte, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. The obtained data sets were subjected to network analysis, linguodiscursive analysis, folksonomic analysis.

The analyzed top Russian journalists have not only the highest Citation Index (the media database of the Medialogia system includes more than 54 thousand sources: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, news agencies, Internet media), but also the widest Internet audience of users and Subscribers: Alexey Venediktov – approx. 1 million subscribers, Vladimir Solovyov – 1.3 million subscribers, Vladimir Pozner – approx. 200 thousand subscribers, Margarita Simonyan – approx. 1 million subscribers, Ksenia Sobchak – 1.4 million subscribers. Given the network nature of communication in the online space and the interaction of the studied journalists with other influencers, the approximate number of consumers of the content produced by them (top journalists) increases by 10 times: the estimated number of users who read the posts below is estimated at 60 million citizens. These factors provide these journalists with 2 channels of influence on public opinion and the political agenda: formal channel –through the media; informal channel – through users and subscribers.

6. Findings

1. Linguistic communication patterns of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak in VKontakte social online accounts:

- top Russian journalists Aleksey Venediktov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak do not operate on such a social platform as Vkontakte, there are no pages with their name and the communities represented by Vkontakte are not organized by the journalists themselves but by their fans who stopped active publishing activities;

- Vladimir Solovyov’s VK account is inconsistent and cannot be a reliable field for collecting and processing data

2. Linguistic communication patterns of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak in Facebook social online accounts:

- the accounts of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov and Ksenia Sobchak on Facebook are not supported or the information is updated irregularly;

- Vladimir Pozner’s Facebook account basically consists of hyperlinks to his publication on the <https://pozneronline.ru/> resource (Figure 1), announcements of his own TV shows or interviews of other

journalists with Pozner in traditional media (magazines, newspapers, TV shows) , as well as reposts of articles and posts of other Facebook users interesting to him;



Figure 01. Hyperlink from Vladimir Pozner’s Facebook account to a resource <https://pozneronline.ru/>

-Margarita Simonyan’s Facebook account is basically retweets of her own messages from Twitter accounts and reposts of articles and posts of other users of Facebook she is interested in.

3. Linguistic communication patterns of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak in Instagram social online accounts:

- Alexey Venediktov maintains a personal online Instagram account, posts are not directly related to political issues and do not reflect the political agenda;

- In his posts on Instagram, Vladimir Solovyov quotes excerpts from the message of President V.V. Putin without expressing his personal opinion and attitude;

- Vladimir Pozner usually begins his posts on Instagram using the first person personal pronoun “I”, thus strengthening his position from the very beginning. His posts are built logically – the introduction, the main part which clearly sets out several arguments “for” and “against”, conclusions. The posts about the Address of the President of the Russian Federation begin with criticism of the work of the government. Pozner uses vocabulary with a negative connotation: “dissatisfied” and “resign”. Next comes criticism of the work of the former prime minister expressed explicitly. Pozner neither openly criticizes the personality of the prime minister himself nor his work. He just talks about the position. The next argument is a description of the personality of the new prime minister. The characteristic features are positive. The units that are used in the description are full of reclamation coloring: “sensible, active, concrete.” The work of the institution under his leadership is rated as “excellent.” The final argument in this post is the constitutional changes proposed by the President. Pozner describes them as “reasonable,” shifting the focus

from emotions to business and work processes. He concludes his post by calling both speech and conclusions “correct”, thus agreeing to the above;

- Margarita Simonyan's posts on Instagram are concentrated around the personality of the candidacy of the new Prime Minister (the post is preceded by a photograph of the new Prime Minister). It gives extremely positive characteristics: clear, smart, decent, modern, incredibly professional, amazing manager. She assures that this is the best choice, with which she congratulates the entire population.

- the sentence that Ksenia Sobchak opens her Instagram post is directly related to the photograph (Figure 2) to which she gives a comment: “My face after reading the news about a constitutional reform.” Then she uses the following populist phrase: “And if you just try to clarify what is happening for non-political subscribers of my Instagram,” in this way she is trying to expand the readership and show that it is she who will be able to understand the situation in an accessible and popular way. In her post, she clearly defines her position and vision of the economic situation (the abbreviations and nicknames of political figures are used as well as borrowings popular among the people (welcome, dreamteam) which allows her to count on the support of subscribers). Not only does Ksenia Sobchak analyze the situation but she also offers her own solution using the rhetorical question at the end: “And what is your ideal picture of a bad future?” Another photograph, characteristic of the posts of Ksenia Sobchak, shows this media figure dressed in royal clothes. A shadow enhances the effect and recreates a picture of importance and significance. The post itself is long, in which she explains her understanding of “political populism.” In it she uses informal vocabulary, lexemes with a negative connotation (briber, thief), terminology (pension reform, power vertical, constitutional coup), rhetorical questions (So what? Where are the appeals of “fiery revolutionaries?”), allusion (“fiery revolutionaries”), declarative sentences (“This is difficult. Therefore, it is not interesting. It is necessary to explain a lot”), graphic stylistic means (“POPULAR”).



Figure 02. Ksenia Sobchak’s Instagram post

4. Linguistic communication patterns of Alexei Venediktov, Vladimir Solovyov, Vladimir Pozner, Margarita Simonyan and Ksenia Sobchak in social online Twitter accounts:

4.1 Aleksey Venediktov uses a pun in his posts on Twitter: with a reaction to Smirnov's post "So exciting before the President's address", he combines two surnames: Smirnov + Mironov (Smironov) and also uses a link to the children's reading room (Sea is worried – once: Smironov is worried - once). The logical plan should be also noted that A. Venediktov "builds" after listening to the President's address putting everything in a clear and concise form:

So.

Constitutional amendments.

1. The priority of national law over international.

2. Strengthening the vertical of power (local government is included in the vertical).

3. The approval of ministers by the Duma.

4. The dismissal of judges on the proposal of the President of the Federation Council.

Through the referendum by the package.

Thus, the mobilization will happen not by means of early elections, but through a referendum, which will be amended by various constitutional amendments.

Introducing the colloquial "so" in the first word, A. Venediktov sets the reader to a certain tonality and sets out his thoughts briefly and clearly. Moreover, in the end he draws the conclusions that he comes to after listening to the President's report.

Another way of organization of the posts of this journalist can be attributed to a personal comment in brackets which creates a double effect and helps to reveal the image of a journalist: a logically thinking person (*Putin reserves the opportunity [taking into account constitutional changes] to head the State Council [functions are still unknown]*).

In the next post, a comment in brackets contributes to creating a contrast that points to the President's preferences for the former prime minister: "*Putin did not come to represent Mishustin in the Duma (he personally represented Medvedev at one time).*"

Comparison is also present in the saying "the system a la Peter the Great", as well as the stable expression "The Eye of the Sovereign", for the understanding of which background knowledge and vertical context are necessary.

The allusion to the *Big Watch broadcast* also requires certain knowledge from the reader and sends him to *Echo of Moscow radio*.

Comparisons are also made by mentioning the hobby of the new Prime Minister and the new US Ambassador to Moscow (Figure 3). The journalist Venediktov makes a caustic conclusion: "*Ah, that's how they are selected*" (that is the basis for comparison) and puts the player's photo in hockey form.



Figure 03. A. Venediktov's post on Twitter

It is also worth noting the use of the words which Venediktov uses by naming a new position of Dmitry Medvedev (*proxy vice president*): proxy – an authorized representative; usually this term is used in computer technology and means an intermediate server (a set of programs) in computer networks that acts as an intermediary between the user and the target server (in this case, both sides may or may not know about mediation), which allows clients both to perform indirect requests (receiving and sending them through a proxy server) to other network services and receive responses).

Characteristic features of A. Venediktov's posts on Twitter are links to his interviews as well as video screens that indicate the names of the radio stations where these interviews took place. Giving a hyperlink, the journalist reposts quoting a key sentence: "A. Venediktov: *Putin is strengthening the power component. What is a Security Council? This is the current Politburo.*" An interesting linguistic device is the "information - question - answer" scheme which also forms a special linguistic pattern of this media personality.

4.2 The stylistic features of the linguistic patterns of Vladimir Solovyov on Twitter can be described as follows: the use of graphic techniques in the design of their posts (capital letters).

To identify citations, the journalist puts the surname either at the beginning: "PUTIN: A SERIOUS TALK ABOUT STABILITY AND SECURITY OF THE WORLD ORDER", or after the quote itself: "THE MOST IMPORTANT IS TO REMOVE THE BARRIERS FOR BUSINESS AND TO REDUCE ITS SENSE" IT IS BEFORE (MISHUSTIN)". He is also characterized by the use of an ordinary font: "Factions will support the candidacy of Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin for the post of Prime Minister of the Russian Federation."

V. Solovyov uses symbols (lightning or exclamation mark) to indicate important messages denotes symbols.

Visualization as a technique is also used by a journalist (Figure 04).



Figure 04. V. Soloviev's post on Twitter

Vladimir Solovyov also uses hyperlinks as a “side view”: for example, the opinion of the “main Norwegian tax specialist” about Mishustin is shown. Thus, Soloviev shows an objective picture of what is happening.

It is also worth noting a hyperlink to your own interview: a photograph of a journalist and a key phrase, stylistically bright and catchy: *“I’m even afraid of the optimism that the government inspires in me”*

4.3 Vladimir Pozner’s Twitter account (also like a Facebook account) basically consists of hyperlinks to his publication on <https://pozneronline.ru/>, announcements of his own television shows or Pozner’s interview with other journalists in traditional media (magazines, newspapers, TV shows).

4.4 Margarita Simonyan’s Twitter account is filled with monosyllabic comments “along the way”. A combination of formal and informal styles is observed:

*“The fate of Russia depends on how many of us will be.
... Such an industry comme il faut.
In short, give birth to everyone. Will have to go to the fourth ”;
- “In fact, adults have been discussing the likelihood of his appointment as prime minister for several years now;”
- “In the Moscow drawing rooms there is not a single person who would not be happy with the appointment of Mishustin.”*

To express her own opinion, the journalist uses evaluative vocabulary (“the strongest message of all time, the best solution”), hyperbolization (“you have no idea how many people have called me now”).

In her posts Simonyan gives a peculiar stylistic characteristic to the Prime Minister describing him more like a situation not a person: *“Mishustin is digitalization, clarity, modern professionalism.”*

In one of the posts, she notes a detail that implicitly also characterizes the Prime Minister: *“All the sons of Mishustin study in Russia. If suddenly anyone is interested.”*

Also interesting are her bet forecasts:

- "If I were the Sultan, I would do so ...";
- "Minindel - Peskov";
- ““ Which of the ministers of the former government ”



Figure 05. M. Simonyan's post on Twitter

The use of a special font characterizes M. Simonyan as a principled and bold journalist (Figure 05).

4.5 Ksenia Sobchak's Twitter account is inconsistent and cannot be a reliable field for collecting and processing data.

7. Conclusion

As a result of the study of linguistic patterns of communication in social online-accounts of top Russian journalists we came to the following conclusions.

The social network and VKontakte accounts are not actually used by top Russian journalists to form and display public political discourse and the political agenda.

The social network and Facebook accounts are used by Russian journalists mainly for announcing posts (programs, interviews, etc.) in other social and traditional media as well as for reposting articles and posts of other Facebook users who are interested in them.

Instagram is the most popular among top Russian journalists for publishing personal (about myself and my daily life) and personal (what I like at the moment; my opinion on something; my photos) information.

Twitter accounts are used by Russian top journalists to the maximum extent as a political digest with an active display of their own political position and for the formation of their own linguistic communication patterns in the online space.

The main characteristics of the linguistic patterns of communication of journalists in social online accounts are: a logical plan of posts; personal comment in brackets; allusions to modern and historical facts and famous events; use of terminology to illustrate thoughts; hyperlinks used by the described scheme “information - question - answer”; the use of graphic techniques in the design of their posts (capital letters); the use of symbols to attract attention; visualization y means of photographs; hyperlinks as a “side view”; combination of formal and informal styles in the description of key events; the use of emotional vocabulary and hyperbolization.

The accounts of top journalists in Russia reflect a certain type of social behavior in response to the political agenda. Each journalist as a public figure interested in publishing relevant content is active in social platforms, using and guided by his own style of presentation of material and his own opinion, which provokes a response from society, further requiring further study depending on the specific role of the user in process of political communication.

Acknowledgments

The research is given a financial support by The Russian Foundation for Basic Research (Department of Humanitarian and Social Science), the research project № 20-012-00033 “Linguistic models of sociopolitical communication in online space: discursive fields, patterns and hybrid methodology of network data analysis” (2020 – 2022).

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